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AUTHOR Ogden, Evelyn Hunt
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ABSTRACT

Based on 47 recommendations for administrative and legislative action set forth in the final report on reducing violence, vandalism, and disruption in the New Jersey public schools, this plan outlines the implementation responsibilities of the state department of education and other agencies. Topics covered include coordination and implementation, legislation, administrative code provisions, county monitoring, technical assistance to school districts, programs for disruptive and violent students, interagency planning, related activities, and plan implementation costs. (Author/WD)

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Plan for Reduction of Violence Vandalism & Disruption in New Jersey Schools 1979-80

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New Jersey State Department of Education

Plan for Reduction of Violence, Vandalism and Disruption in New Jersey Schools

Fred G. Burke
Commissioner of Education

Prepared under the direction of
Evelyn Hunt Ogden, Ed.D.
Director, Priority Planning
Office of the Commissioner

New Jersey State Department of Education
225 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

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INTRODUCTION

Acts of crime and disruption have become a matter of public concern in New Jersey's public schools, however, the State is not unique in having such a problem. Crime and disruption in the schools is a nation-wide development that grew rapidly in the 1960's and has not substantially decreased since the early 1970's.

At the request of the State Board of Education a task force was formed in 1978 by order of the Commissioner to study violence and vandalism in the schools. The Task Force included appropriate departmental personnel, representatives of educational associations and representatives from the Department of the Public Advocate, Attorney General's Office and Educational Improvement Centers.

The Task Force did not attempt to collect empirical data. Instead, it used surveys of existing research, meetings with special consultants and three public hearings as a basis for developing recommendations.

A final report, *Reducing Violence, Vandalism and Disruption in the Schools* was submitted to the Commissioner and State Board of Education in May 1979. The report contained forty-seven recommendations for administrative and legislative action.

A thorough review of the Task Force recommendations has been made by the Department of Education Staff and the State Board of Education. Most of the recommendations have been incorporated into the *1979-80 Department of Education Operational Plan for Reducing Violence, Vandalism and Disruption in New Jersey Schools.*

The various activities included in the plan will be implemented by Department staff in cooperation with other agencies with interest and expertise in this area. Overall coordination of the program will be the responsibility of the Commissioner's Office.

COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Analysis:

Reducing violence and vandalism will involve activities which currently cut across the entire Department of Education in terms of administrative responsibility. The widespread involvement in implementing a plan for reducing this problem will enhance the commitment of the total Department to this priority. Other advantages of this decentralized approach are:

1. It takes advantage of the specialized skills resident in the various Divisions
2. Eliminates the need for new positions or staff reorganization
3. Divides the work load so that current staff can manage the activities

However, there is a need to coordinate the activities and insure their timely completion. The overall management of the plan in this area will be the responsibility of the Commissioner's Office.

Activities:

The Commissioner's Office will coordinate and monitor the plan implementation and be responsible for needed modifications in strategies and serve as liaison with the State Board. Individual activities will be assigned to Divisions as specified in the plan.

Responsibility:

Coordination: Commissioner's Office (Evelyn Ogden)
Implementation: Department of Education
Educational Improvement Centers and
Associations

LEGISLATION

Analysis:

Many bills which are peripheral to, or directly address violence and vandalism in the schools have been introduced in the New Jersey legislature. Following is a brief initial analysis of legislation pending as of September 1, 1979. This legislation merits additional study by the Department.

1. Requirement of Juveniles to pay property/personal injuries

   A1547 *This act would require payment by the juvenile for damage to property or medical treatment for persons.*

2. Legislation to increase difficulty for juveniles to obtain drugs and alcohol

   A3249 *This act increases penalties for the purchases of alcohol for those under the legal age and for others who buy alcohol for those under the legal age. Penalty is a fine and loss of driver's license and possible imprisonment.*

   A3250, A3265, A3262 *Provide fines, imprisonment and loss of driver's license (if drinking in a car) for purchase or possession of alcohol in school or public place. These bills are softer versions of A3249 and do not provide penalties for those buying alcohol for a minor.*

   A3263 *Provides for a system of collecting data on alcoholism including youth bureaus and delinquency.*

   A1826 *Makes it unlawful for a minor to possess or consume alcoholic beverages in a car or public place.*

   S3331, A1594 *Makes it illegal to sell drug accessories.*

   A1668 *Provides maximum liability of parents for juvenile acts and requires a finding that the child's acts are related to parent's negligence. (This legislation appears to meet the requirements of the Superior Court on constitutional grounds.)*

A3004 *Establishes a Youth and Alcohol Study Commission. The Commissioner would be a member.*

3. Provides increased penalties for trespassers

   S360 *Makes trespassing a disorderly persons offense.*

4. Provides for suspension of students charged with assault on school staff and procedure for expulsion

   Legislation has been signed into law

5. Assault on a staff member considered aggravated assault

   S3020, A3309 *Considers assault on a public school staff member aggravated assault.*

6. Compensation of school staff who are victims

   S501 *Provides funds through fines for the Violent Crimes Compensation Board. (These funds might be used to compensate school staff.)*

7. Judge can treat minors above 14 as adult

   A3264 *Provides that the judge can treat alcohol offenses of minors above 14 as adults.*

   A1705 *Provides that the judge can treat any 14 year old who has committed a disorderly persons offense as an adult*

Listed below are two areas in which legislation will be recommended:

1. Legislation that defines the school as well as the individual as a victim in school related cases, so that outcomes of legal proceedings can be reported to the schools for planning purposes.

2. Revisions of the New Jersey Public School Safety law to allow more flexible use of funds in reducing violence and vandalism. Currently funds can only be used for security guards.

Activities:

The Department's Inter-Governmental Relations Office will develop position statements concerning legislation related to violence and vandalism.

Responsibility:

Division of Operations, Research and Evaluation (Paul Muller)

ADMINISTRATIVE CODE PROVISIONS

Analysis:

An initial step in having orderly schools is to make sure that the rules are understood which govern the behavior of students and the staff in enforcing the rules. All districts will be required to develop policies related to staff, parent and student rights and responsibilities and to disseminate the information. In addition relevant information concerning the laws related to school conduct will be disseminated.

Currently violence and vandalism is reported as a separate process from the thorough and efficient reporting requirements. Code will be introduced which will incorporate this reporting procedure into the Annual Report of districts. This action would lead to development of remedial plans in high need districts.

Activities:

A subcommittee of the State Board and Department staff will develop administrative code which will require:

1. every local district to develop a written policy concerning the responsibilities and rights of school staff members in maintaining discipline and order and to disseminate the policy together with a digest of relevant state laws and local regulations. Local rights and responsibilities of school staff members will be established by board policy with appropriate involvement of school staff and the community.

2. every local district to develop a written discipline code and publish it in the form of a handbook containing a digest of relevant state laws and local regulations concerning student rights and responsibility. Local discipline codes will be developed with involvement of administrators, teachers, students and parents.

3. that the Violence and Vandalism Report be incorporated into the Annual Report of local districts.

4. maximum sizes for new school buildings.

Responsibility:

State Board and Commissioner's Office (Evelyn Ogden liaison with input from Joseph Zach)

COUNTY MONITORING

Analysis:

At present, a plan for reducing violence and vandalism must remain incomplete since the specific data on the problem is only beginning to be collected from the field. The collection and analysis of this data is essential for future planning. County Offices must instruct and encourage the collection of this data.

Districts will identify schools which have a high degree of violence and vandalism as part of the thorough and efficient monitoring process. Disruption is the antithesis of thorough and efficient education.

Where violence and vandalism are determined to be major obstacles in providing a thorough and efficient education, remedial plans will be required from the districts and approved by the county offices.

County Offices have not only a regulatory role in reducing violence and vandalism but also an assistance role. Each county will organize a task force which includes representatives of agencies concerned with juveniles.

Activities:

1. The County Offices and the Division of Operations, Research and Evaluation will refine the system for collecting data on violence and vandalism.

2. The Deputy's Office and the County Offices will incorporate violence and vandalism into the monitoring system.

3. County Offices will incorporate, in the June 1, Districts Evaluation Letters, recommendations for improvement in districts experiencing high levels of violence and vandalism.

4. The County staff person assigned the responsibility for reporting violence and vandalism will organize relevant agencies interested in reducing violence and vandalism in each county. A committee of representatives from existing county task forces will develop guidelines for establishing and maintaining the task forces.

Responsibility:

Deputy's Office (William Brooks and County Superintendents)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Analysis:

Districts which have a significant rate of violence and vandalism will require varied technical assistance. Included in the assistance will be written materials (i.e. model discipline codes), group inservice on strategies which can be used in planning to reduce the problem, indepth workshops which train staff in specific techniques (i.e. conflict management) and individualized assistance in plan development in high need districts.

The following areas for technical assistance have been identified:

Law and Policy
- *Digest of state laws and decisions on school staff rights and responsibilities*
- *Digest of state laws and decisions on student and parental rights and responsibilities*
- *Sample board policies for responsibilities of school staff members in maintaining order*
- *Sample board policies concerning discipline*

Program Planning
- *Guidelines for planning programs for reducing violence and vandalism*
  - *Organizing school level task forces*
  - *Analyzing the local problem*
  - *Behavior patterns leading to violence and vandalism*
  - *Strategies for reducing violence and vandalism*
    - *School maintenance*
    - *Student and staff absenteeism*
    - *Discipline codes*
    - *Rewards for non-disruptive students*
    - *Counseling disruptive students*
    - *Parental involvement*
    - *Alternative programs*
    - *Community schools*
    - *Reducing class and school size*
  - *Involvement of other agencies (i.e. CETA, local police)*
  - *Funding sources for reducing violence and vandalism*
  - *Community schools*

Technical Assistance
- *Assistance in developing district and school level plans for reducing violence and vandalism in high need districts*

Training
- *Student growth and development problems*
- *Resolving conflict*
- *Enhancing self-esteem and respect for others*

General Information
- *How to report a criminal act*
- *Avoiding being a victim of crime*
- *Identifying child abuse*
- *Staff oriented information on the juvenile justice system*
- *Guidelines for locker search and seizure*
- *Purchasing security devices*
- *Anti-vandalism approaches for new facilities*
- *Guidelines for hiring security guards*
- *Reducing or eliminating violence related to racial integration*

Activities:

Potentially the Department, Educational Improvement Centers, New Jersey educational associations, Higher Education and other agencies have an interest in providing technical assistance on this issue. By using all available resources, services can be maximized and costs minimized. The activities listed below are based on initial discussions and would be expanded through broader planning.

1. Law and Policy
   A. Digest of state law and decisions on school staff rights and responsibilities.
   The Department of Education would work cooperatively with the New Jersey Educational Association and School Boards to produce this document. Districts would receive the document in a form suitable for local printing.
   Responsibility: Division of Controversies and Disputes (Elease Greene-Smith)

   B. Digest of state law and decisions on parental and student rights and responsibility.
   The Department would update and add to the students rights and responsibility digest previously developed. The document would be in a form suitable for local printing.
   Responsibility: Division of Controversies and Disputes (Elease Greene-Smith)

   C. Sample local board policies for student discipline and teacher responsibilities to maintain order.
   Sample policies would be collected through the County Offices, reviewed for legality by Controversies and Disputes and selected models published in

Interact.
Responsibility: Deputy's Office (William Brooks)
Commissioner's Office (Carolyn Forney)

2. Program Planning
Guidelines
A Department committee, supplemented by local districts personnel who have developed plans, would prepare general guidelines for planning local programs. The guidelines would be published in *Interact.*
Responsibility: Division of Operations, Research and Evaluation (Wayne Conrad) Commissioner's Office (Carolyn Forney)

New Jersey Education Association will produce a manual describing specific strategies for reducing violence and vandalism in October. The Department will ask local and national educators to develop strategy descriptions to supplement the New Jersey Education Association document if needed to cover strategies suggested in the Task Force Report. These would be published in *Interact.*
Responsibility: Commissioner's Office (Evelyn Ogden)

3. Technical Assistance
Under grants from the State Law Enforcement Planning Agency, Educational Improvement Centers will provide inservice and technical assistance to local districts.
Responsibility: Deputy's Office (William Brooks)

4. Training
Higher Education
The Department will recommend to the Department of Higher Education the development of course content related to reducing violence and vandalism. (Rutgers will offer a program for graduate students on the topic this fall and other colleges have expressed interest)
Responsibility: Division of Field Services (Carolyn Holmes) Division of Operations, Research and Evaluation (Peter Walling)

New Jersey Education Association
The New Jersey Education Association will develop a series of workshops for teachers related to reducing violence and vandalism.
Responsibility for Liaison: Commissioner's Office (Evelyn Ogden liaison)

Conferences

The New Jersey Education Association and Department of Education (probably all other associations as well) will sponsor two conferences in October related to planning for the reduction of violence and vandalism. The September *Interact* will advertise these sessions. Other statewide and national conferences are planned and will involve the Department.
Responsibility: Commissioner's Office (Evelyn Ogden liaison)

5. General Information
The Department of Education will research and develop information on the following topics:
   - How to report a criminal act
   - Avoiding being a victim of crime
   - Identifying child abuse
   - Staff oriented information on the juvenile justice system
   - Guidelines for locker search and seizure
   - Purchasing security devices
   - Anti-vandalism approaches for new facilities
   - Guidelines for hiring security guards

   This information will be printed in *Interact*.
   Responsibility: Commissioner's Office (Carolyn Forney)

Overall Strategy for Printed Material

The major strategy for the Department's dissemination of written information on Violence and Vandalism will be a special issue of *Interact* to be published in Spring 1980. The issue would be formated to allow for development of a local notebook. Other issues of *Interact* will report on status of activities.
Responsibility: Division of Operations, Research and Evaluation (Lynn Price) Commissioner's Office (Carolyn Forney)

PROGRAMS FOR DISRUPTIVE AND VIOLENT STUDENTS

Analysis:

There is a need to develop alternative programs and strategies for students who are disruptive and/or violent. Such behaviors are stretched on a continuum

from minor, an occasional disruption of class activities, to consistent intolerable behavior which is dangerous to students and staff.

The solution to this problem is not simple and has educational, social and financial ramifications. While problem behavior exists on a continuum so must the solution. The solution must protect the educational rights of both the non-disruptive and disruptive students. Attention must be given to associated issues such as "teacher burn-out".

Activities:

A task force will review the literature, evaluate existing programs, consider the funding and legal alternatives and the requirements for interagency cooperation. The task force should include representatives of the juvenile justice system, Vocational Division Field Services, County Superintendent, fiscal experts and selected professionals who have developed or operated alternative programs. The product of the task force will be a plan for piloting alternative programs, disseminating information and recommending futher action.

The following general areas be included in the study:

In School Strategies
Programs aimed at early identification of disruptive students and the provision of specific programs or services. These might include training of teachers to resolve conflict in the classroom, training and assignment of crisis intervention teams, modified guidance services. The strategies would be aimed at preventing minor behavior problems from developing into major disruption patterns, while maintaining the student within the school and classroom.

Intra or inter District Alternative Day Schools
Programs aimed at rehabilitating and educating chronically disruptive students who after due process are determined by the district or by the courts to jeopardize the learning and/or safety of other students and staff. These programs might consist of Special classes within the school or separate facilities and individual educational plans. Funding might be provided through a cost factor.

Residential Alternative Schools

Programs aimed at providing legal and educational alternatives for students who have been convicted of crimes or expelled from school and require an educational alternative other than return to the regular school and local social environment. The programs would be residential in nature. Such programs would require new forms of interagency cooperation, legislative initiatives and identification of funding alternatives. Such programs might be state or privately operated.

Responsibility:

Division of School Programs (Catherine Havrilesky)

INTERAGENCY PLANNING

Analysis:

Juvenile violence and vandalism is a problem which is not confined to the schools. For example, truant students are not only in violation of school related laws but have been shown to be major participants in community crime. The police, courts, social agencies, and community members as well as schools are concerned with the problem. In order to solve the problem, those affected by it must be involved.

Activities:

1. Recommendations concerning the content of teacher and principal certification required courses will be discussed with the Board of Examiners.
   Responsibility: Division of Field Services (Carolyn Holmes)

2. A clear description of the juvenile justice system will be prepared for use by school personnel.
   Responsibility: Division of Operations, Research and Evaluation (Wayne Conrad)

3. The State Board will suggest to the Governor's Office the streamlining of statutes and codes related to juveniles.
   Responsibility: State Board (Pam Wilson) Division of Operation, Research and Evaluation (Paul Muller)

4. The Department will actively participate in the State Law Enforcement Planning Agency study of out-of-home placement policies and activities.

Results of this study should be considered by the Task Force on Alternative Programs.
Responsibility: Division of School Programs (Catherine Havrilesky)

5. The Department will work with appropriate agencies to develop guidelines concerning procedures for search and seizure within public schools.
Responsibility: Commissioner's Office

6. The Department will cooperate fully with the Special Joint Committee of the County Prosecutors Association of New Jersey and the Division of Criminal Justice to prepare, sponsor, produce and disseminate "A Manual on Criminal and Civil Law for School Administrators."
Responsibility: Division of Controversies and Disputes (Joseph Zach)

7. The Department will meet with college deans to discuss content in classroom management, community involvement and study of the juvenile justice system in courses leading to certification.
Responsibility: Commissioner and Field Services (Carolyn Holmes)

8. The Violence and Vandalism Implementation Plan will be referred to the Commissioner on Children's Services.
Responsibility: Commissioner's Office (Tom Corcoran)

9. The Commissioner will meet with the Chief Justice to discuss the possibility for a state Interagency Coordinating Council for Reducing Crime and Disruption in the Schools and the Department's plan for reducing violence and vandalism.
Responsibility: Commissioner

10. Discussion of the Department's violence and vandalism implementation plan will be recommended as a cabinet agenda item.
Responsibility: Commissioner

11. The Commissioner will discuss the following areas with the Attorney General to determine what additional action can be taken:

    A. reporting of suspected criminal acts by local school staff
    B. protection of school staff from reprisals
    C. need for further review of the juvenile justice system

D. reporting of court findings and decisions concerning juvenile offenders to the schools.
Responsibility: Commissioner

OTHER ACTIVITIES WHICH ADDRESS REDUCTION OF VIOLENCE, VANDALISM AND DISRUPTION

Analysis:

A few needed activites represent special areas of study or concern which do not lead themselves to inclusions in other sections of the plan. These are handled separately in this section.

Activities:

1. Analysis and reporting to the State Board concerning incidents of violence and vandalism in the schools.
   Responsibility: Division of Operations, Research and Evaluation (Peter Walling)

2. Study and disseminate ways to protect school staff from reprisals.
   Responsibility: New Jersey Educational Association, Commissioner's Office (Carolyn Forney)

3. Conduct a feasibility study concerning insurance coverage to reimburse school staff for property damage claims.
   Responsibility: Commissioner's Office (Rick Mills)

4. Seek funding to support an extensive study of factors in predelinquent behavior, identify successful programs and relate findings to proposed policy decisions.
   Responsibility: Funding: Marvin Habas
   Study: Division of Operations, Research and Evaluation

5. Administration of revised Public School Safety Act Revisions should support activities aimed at reduction of violence and vandalism other than and including security guards.
   Responsibility: Office of Grants Management (Marvin Habas)

6. The Department will prepare a summary of funding alternatives which address violence and vandalism. Responsibility: Office of Grants Management (Marvin Habas)

7. The Department working with Labor and Industry will support federal and state legislation for the revision of appropriate child labor laws to permit the employment of 14 and 15 year olds as part of cooperative or career awareness education programs. Responsibility: Division of Vocational Education and Career Preparation (William Wenzel) Division of Operations, Research and Evaluation (Paul Muller)

8. The Department will develop new planning and approval procedures for distribution of New Jersey's Public School Safety Law funds. (This is an interim measure until the legislation can be modified) Responsibility: Division of School Finance and Regulatory Services (Vincent Calabrese)

9. A Department committee will give consideration to requiring background checks on security guards. Responsibility: Division of Operations, Research and Evaluation

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

The proposed budget for the plan above currently budgeted costs is detailed below:

Department of Education

Printing legal digests	$ 2,500
Consultants for material preparation	5,000
Study of pre-delinquent behavior (Grant funding)	10,000
Staff time (estimated to be 322 working days. Cost per staff day estimated at $100 which includes professional salary, fringe and secretarial support)	32,200

Local Program Support (Provided by revision of the New Jersey School Safety law)

Current appropriation level	$ 3,000,000
Legislative authorization	$ 6,000,000